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CONTRACT NO: DAMD17-91-C-1112

TITLE: BETA - ADRENERGIC BLOCKADE AND LACTATE METABOLISM  
DURING EXERCISE AT HIGH ALTITUDE

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REPORT DATE: January 28, 1993

TYPE OF REPORT: FINAL REPORT

PREPARED FOR: U.S. ARMY MEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT  
COMMAND. FORT DIETRICK, MD 21702-5012

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## FINAL REPORT - DAMD 17-91-C-1112

## BETA ADRENERGIC BLOCKADE AND LACTATE METABOLISM DURING EXERCISE AT HIGH ALTITUDE

January 28, 1993

## FOREWORD

For the protection of human subjects, the investigators have adhered to policies of applicable Federal Law 45CFR 56.

## INTRODUCTION:

This contract was to perform high altitude research on Pikes Peak Colorado with the sea level phase to be done at Palo Alto in the summer of 1991. The thrust was to test the hypothesis that the adreno-sympathetic system mediated many of the adaptations to high altitude, particularly the metabolic changes.

With regard to the metabolic changes, the primary hypothesis was that high adrenergic stimulation on arrival at altitude would stimulate epinephrine release which in turn would stimulate the release of lactate and its metabolism by the working muscle. After 3 weeks acclimatization to 4300 m, we expected the subsidence of the adrenergic tone would be demonstrated by lower levels of epinephrine which would then cause less release and metabolism of lactate. Other metabolic fuels, particularly glucose and fat, would become relatively more important.

To approach these hypotheses we enlisted 12 healthy young men to go to the Peak, 6 of them having beta blockade (propranolol 240 mg/day) and 6 being on placebo. With the attrition of one control subject after the sea level phase, 11 men were taken to the peak. The investigative team included scientists from a number of institutions, including University of California at Berkeley, Stanford University, University of Colorado both the Denver and Boulder campuses, NASA, St. Louis University, University of Waterloo, Canada, and the University of Sydney, Australia.

Femoral artery and vein catheterizations were done on 3 days for the purpose of measuring cardiac output, arterial pressure, arterial blood gases, and various metabolites. The catheterizations were done once at sea level, on arrival at altitude, and after 3 weeks acclimatization to altitude. As a result of the dedication and cooperation of the investigative team, and the very good spirit among the subjects, all facets of this complicated study were accomplished without injury or complication to the subjects and without compromise of the scientific goals. A physician was present at all times at sea level and on the Peak which insured that the subjects were in good health throughout.

Accession For	
NTIS	CRA&I
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Availability Codes	
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## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

OMB No 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 28 JANUARY 1993	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED FINAL REPORT (6/10/91 - 12/9/92)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Beta-Adrenergic Blockade and Lactate Metabolism During Exercise at High Altitude		5. FUNDING NUMBERS Contract No. DAMD17-91-C-1112  0601102A 3M161102BS15.CA.064 WUDA335893	
6. AUTHOR(S) John T. Reeves			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) University of Colorado School of Medicine 4200 East 9th Street Denver, Colorado 80262		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command Fort Detrick Frederick, Maryland 21702-5012		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES			
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  The primary thrust of this contract was to perform high altitude research on Pikes Peak Colorado (with the sea level phase to be done in Palo Alto) in the summer of 1991. The work was to test the hypothesis that the adreno-sympathetic system mediated many of the adaptations to high altitude, particularly the metabolic changes.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS RA III; RA V; Environmental Adaptation; High Altitude Exercise; Metabolism; Volunteers		15. NUMBER OF PAGES	
		16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Unlimited

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2/89)  
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18  
298-102

The contract has extended well beyond the data collection period because of the wealth of data which was collected and which required further analysis. This analysis is currently proceeding at the expense of the participating laboratories.

## RESEARCH SUMMARY TO DATE:

### 1. Ambulatory blood pressure monitoring.

Blood pressure by cuff was monitored for 24 hours on 2 occasions at sea level and on arrival at 4300 m, after 8 to 9 days and after 19 days at 4300 m. The results have been submitted (1) by Dr. Wolfel. In summary, the results showed that the subjects taking placebo increased their arterial pressures both during the day and at night. In two subjects the increases were substantial. The magnitude of the increase related to their urinary excretion of nor epinephrine. For the subjects taking propranolol, the ambulatory pressures were less, but these subjects also increased their pressure at 4300 m, and the increase also related to their nor epinephrine excretion. We concluded that nor epinephrine was the primary factor mediating the blood pressure rise, but we could not exclude a possible role for epinephrine. These are novel data.

### 2. Catecholamine metabolism.

As expected, 24 hour urinary excretion of epinephrine was little changed, but the excretion of nor epinephrine increased to a plateau of the first 10 days. The novel aspect of the research was that the blood studies suggested that at rest there was a net release of nor epinephrine across the leg. The data suggested that resting muscle was a major source of the increased blood level for nor epinephrine. Dr. Mazzeo has submitted the paper for publication (2).

We had expected that the beta blocked subjects would not show an increase in blood lactate on arrival at altitude and that they would therefore not show the usual decrease in lactate with acclimatization. However, the data indicated that propranolol lowered blood lactate both at sea level and at altitude, but it did not completely block the rise in lactate on arrival nor did it completely prevent the subsequent fall with acclimatization. That is, the beta adrenergic system could not be invoked to explain the "lactate paradox". Thus the working hypothesis could not be sustained. However, the studies did show that the beta adrenergic system could account, in part for the lactate changes at altitude, even though other factors were operating.

### 3. Lactate and Glucose Kinetics.

As indicated in the mid term report, there are thousands of samples to be analyzed by mass spectroscopy before the kinetics can be established. At this time, the analysis of glucose samples has been completed. Scanning of the data indicates that the glucose turnover at rest and during exercise is reasonable, indicating that the quality of the data is good. The lactate samples are now in process of analysis. Because the analysis is not yet complete, we are not in a position to offer conclusions about the results. However, the analyses are proceeding according to plan and completion is expected by the 1st of June.

#### 4. Blood volume.

The blood volume data are of particular interest, because Dr. Grover had proposed that red cell mass increase would not compensate for the plasma volume decrease at altitude, while Dr. Dahms was of the contrary opinion. The analysis has proceeded between Dr. Grover, Dr. Dahms, and Dr. Greenleaf, requiring considerable melding of three laboratories. The data show good agreement between the Evans blue and the carbon monoxide methods. The results indicate that there is the expected drop in plasma volume. The surprise was that half of the subjects showed a compensatory increase in red cell mass, while half did not. Whether the subject was on propranolol or not was of no consequence. Thus both Dr. Grover and Dr. Dahms appear to be correct. Some subjects can increase red cell mass during 3 weeks at 4300 m and some cannot. Reticulocytes were not different between the groups, and thus a different level of blood formation seemed not to be the answer. However, preliminary examination of blood CO levels (before the administration of CO) suggested that there were higher levels in subjects with no increase in red cell mass. We are currently pursuing the possibility that there is increased destruction of red cells in some subjects at altitude, but not in other subjects.

#### 5. Spectral analysis of the electrocardiogram.

Dr. Richard Hughson has completed the analysis and has an initial draft of a manuscript (4). In the control group, there was alteration of both sympathetic and parasympathetic input on arrival at altitude. The data indicated that propranolol significantly reduced the sympathetic input to the heart rate, but did not change the parasympathetic input.

6. Echo Doppler analysis has indicated that pulmonary arterial pressure and resistance increased at altitude in both control and blocked subjects. The resistance however at 3 weeks was higher in the blocked subjects indicating that Beta adrenergic tone probably offset some of the hypoxic pulmonary vasoconstriction. The manuscript is in preparation.

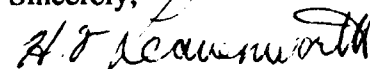
#### BUDGET

Total budget for the project was \$153,376. With the completion of the grant period, all funds were expended as proposed in the letter of 21 August, 1992.

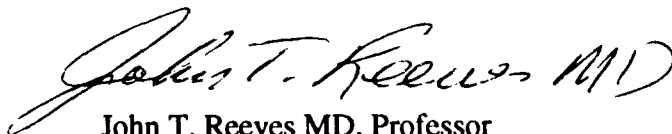
#### CONCLUSION

The project has been completed, the data analysis continues at the expense of the various laboratories involved, and manuscripts are being prepared for publication. I feel that we are on schedule for a project of this rather enormous magnitude. Please inform me if more detail is needed.

Sincerely,



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